

TESTIMONY OF
LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAY SHELDON
NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE
SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
16 JANUARY 2023
SENATE BILL 2146

Chair Wobbema, Vice Chair Axtman, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jay Sheldon, and I am here on behalf of the North Dakota Military Commission to express support for SB 2146, which would enable North Dakota to join the interstate licensing compact for occupational therapy.

Our state is home to many dedicated military service members and their families, who can face the challenges of relocating for military service. For military spouses who are licensed occupational therapists, moving across state lines can mean navigating a new set of licensure requirements and possible delays.

Joining the occupational therapy compact would provide licensed therapists from the more than 25 member states (3 other states with pending legislation) the ability to transfer their credentials to North Dakota with minimal administrative burden. This flexibility is vital for military families, allowing spouses to maintain their careers and, at the same time, helping to address the statewide demand for occupational therapists. As many North Dakota communities face shortages in this field, compact membership would enable our state to tap into a larger pool of qualified professionals who are ready and willing to serve all of our citizens.

North Dakota has long been committed to supporting military families, and joining this compact is a meaningful way to honor that commitment. It would make North Dakota a more military-friendly state, easing the licensure process for our service members' spouses and empowering them to positively impact their communities.

On behalf of the North Dakota Military Commission, I ask you to support SB 2146.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.